CANADIAN NORTHERN CORRIDOR SPECIAL SERIES

THE USAGE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AS A TOOL FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH NORTHERN INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES

Jenanne Ferguson and Evgeniia (Jen) Sidorova

FOREWORD

THE CANADIAN NORTHERN CORRIDOR RESEARCH PROGRAM PAPER SERIES

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Federal, provincial/territorial legislations and industry regulations on Indigenous engagement should explicitly recognize the connection between Indigenous languages, nature and the land, and should reflect this connection in their policies (Indigenous engagement recommendation policies).

- Government and industry should incorporate the usage of Indigenous languages into consultants' data-gathering process through Indigenous decision-making practices, e.g., Sharing Circles and similar methods to encourage meaningful engagement between co-researchers, industry and the communities.

- The federal government should create a Task Force on the Incorporation of Indigenous Languages and Knowledges into Engagement Practices, consisting primarily of Indigenous experts who can advise best practices for the incorporation of Indigenous language terms into Indigenous engagement policies and strategize further on how language usage could contribute to meaningful engagement.

- Consulting companies and agencies should hire both fluent speakers of Indigenous languages and fluent speakers of English and French as well as language learners from a community to work in translation-related tasks on consultation projects. Fluent speakers can help translate between languages if needed; those who are still learning the language are provided for a space to develop skills.

- Government and industry should organize formal cultural/linguistic training programs for consultants and researchers working on projects like the Canadian Northern Corridor.

KEY MESSAGES

- The usage of Indigenous languages should be incorporated at all stages of community engagement process with Indigenous governments and communities.

- Government and industry should incorporate the usage of Indigenous languages into consultants' data-gathering process through Indigenous decision-making practices; for example, instituting a Sharing Circle can be an effective practice for ensuring meaningful engagement between co-researchers, industry and the communities. As mentioned in Section 2 of this paper, Sharing Circles are communication tools used by Indigenous communities (and other cultural groups that have strong traditions of oral history) to discuss issues in an equal, supportive, and diplomatic ways; they reflect values of sharing, supporting, and respecting life experiences through personal interaction and group consensus to recognize issues and find solutions (Rothe et al. 2019). The use of a Two-Eyed Seeing (Reid et al. 2020) or a Two-Roads Approach (L'Hommecourt 2022) or other local Indigenous methodologies should also be incorporated into consultation processes. These ethical spaces help address a phenomenon from multiple perspectives, thus contributing to pluralist realism approaches (Fellows 2017).

- Federal and provincial/territorial legislations and industry regulations on Indigenous engagement should explicitly recognize the connection between Indigenous languages and the land, and should reflect this connection in their policies, Indigenous engagement recommendations in particular. The federal government should create a Task Force on Incorporation of Indigenous Languages and Knowledges into Engagement Practices. This task force would consist primarily of Indigenous experts on language and knowledge who can advise on how best to incorporate Indigenous language terms into Indigenous engagement policies and strategize further on how language usage could contribute to meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities and governments, consulting firms, and other institutional bodies.

- Consulting companies and agencies should hire both fluent speakers of Indigenous languages and fluent speakers of English and French, as well as language learners from a community, to work in translation-related tasks on consultation projects. Fluent speakers can help translate between languages if necessary, and those who are still learning the language can be provided with an environment to develop their skills, thus supporting language revitalization and transmission in the community. Scobie and Rodgers (2019) suggest making Indigenous language skills a requirement for jobs that are connected to the stewardship of land, culture and knowledge systems; helping learners achieve fluency thus creates more possibilities of filling these jobs with speakers in the future.

- The government and industry should organize formal cultural (and linguistic) training programs for consultants and researchers working on projects like the CNC. Cultural competency necessarily must include language competency, due to the interrelation of language and culture that we elaborate on here. Joly and Westman (2017) emphasize the importance of training and education for regulators, industry proponents and consultants, which could promote an understanding of cultures and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples in northern Alberta (Joly and Westman 2017) — such a training program could employ local Indigenous knowledge keepers as instructors and focus

heavily on the local Indigenous language(s) and their links to land (and thus worldview); this is elaborated upon in Section 4.2. Federal funding agencies should encourage researchers to conduct community-based studies with Indigenous governments and communities in Indigenous languages.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Northern Corridor (CNC) program integrates formal academic research and a strategy of engagement with potentially impacted communities (Fellows et al. 2020). Finding common ground among Indigenous peoples, governments and industry on engagement and consultation practices is imperative to the future of resource development and the Canadian economy, and ultimately to the reconciliation of the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Canada (Boyd and Lorefice 2018). In this paper, we focus on language, stressing that languages are more than just tools. Rather, all communicative systems also hold both individual and cultural identities, histories and memory, and encode knowledge in specific ways.

This article investigates how Indigenous languages can contribute to meaningful engagement particularly within the context of the CNC concept; our recommendations also work toward strengthening existing Indigenous policy initiatives in Canada, uplifting Indigenous worldviews, and potentially supporting the reconciliation process. We draw upon primarily Indigenous scholars in explaining the reasons why using Indigenous languages matters for fostering meaningful engagement during research, consultation, and community engagement activities and address methods by which they can be implemented. After examining some past/ongoing attempts at this incorporation, we identify in our policy recommendations five different ways that the entire process of community engagement can align with the usage of Indigenous languages.

'Meaningful engagement' involves (our italics) " […] *good faith* on the part of both parties […] *two-way dialogue* […] substantive responses to information request (including *translation* in some contexts), *openness to accommodation* and mitigation measures, a *view to accommodation* of conflicting interests, *demonstrable integration* of Indigenous communities' concerns […]" (Wright 2020, 29). Overall, meaningful engagement challenges the hegemony of Euro-Western approaches to science, research and communication, and permit and support Indigenous languages and perspectives as equals. Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies are much different, especially because they do not position language as a separate concept from nature and land, and overall stress a reciprocal and interdependent relationship with the earth (Tully 2018, Reed et al. 2022).

Over seventy diverse Indigenous languages belonging to twelve different language families were spoken in Canada in 2016, but only by about 0.6 per cent of the population (Statistics Canada 2017). Notably, within the proposed CNC region we find the Cree dialects, Ojibwe dialects, multiple Athapaskan languages and Inuktut, which have some of the highest speaker numbers among Indigenous languages in Canada. The loss of Indigenous linguistic diversity in Canada is connected to the assimilatory policies and actions toward Indigenous cultures as a whole; in particular, cultural genocide and linguicide were spurred on through the educational system, especially that of residential schools, which removed children from their home communities and subjected them to

traumas that led to cultural and linguistic stigma. Loss of language led to gaps in cultural transmission, and so many beliefs related to land (and entwined spirituality) were lost, diminished or submerged over time. Due to the Eurocentric focus in research that devalues Indigenous knowledges, nuanced relationships that Indigenous community members still have with the environment tend to be overlooked in environmental impact assessments and other reports.

Many Indigenous communities are actively engaged in language revitalization processes, which vary according to the needs and desires of the specific communities, and the number of second-language speakers of Indigenous languages has been rising for some time (Norris 2007). Focusing on language to foster meaningful engagement can also support the kinds of learning processes and revitalization projects already underway in these communities. Examples of how language goals are tied to processes of reconciliation (e.g., the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation committee) as well as other frameworks (e.g., those proposed by the United Nations) are also discussed; it is crucial to discover as many approaches as possible to elevate the status of the languages from the perspectives of speakers, nonspeakers and outsiders, and this can be to some extent achieved through creating resources for literacy in the language (Davis 2017).

We identify four key reasons why language matters to meaningful engagement: land and language are connected, language helps preserve the integrity of Indigenous knowledge, language can help foster trust and possibly reconciliation, and language can help subvert power imbalances. Firstly, we highlight the land-language connection and how this is ideologically conceptualized in many Indigenous cultures (Ferguson and Weaselboy 2020); language is linked to land as an "integrated cultural resource" (Perley 2011) that also constitutes a spiritual relationship in which humans have a responsibility to steward land as well as associated knowledge — which is intertwined with Indigenous languages. Numerous studies reveal how land and language stewardship work together synergistically (Schreyer 2008, 2011, 2016; see also Fettes 2019 for an overview), and foster "sustainable relations" between land and language (Ferguson and Weaselboy 2020). Closely connected is the second critical point — languages, even closely related ones — do not exist purely of one-to-one, easily substituted correspondences. The language we use to talk about the land matters. Different languages bring into focus — or even bring into existence — different kinds of realities, philosophies, behaviours and perceptions (Harre et al. 1999; see Armstrong 2018 re: the Syilx concept of *tmixw*). This matters significantly when attempting to consult and gather data on Indigenous knowledges (e.g., Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or TEK).

Our third reason concerns the creation of trust within the engagement process. Fellows (2017) notes that the foundation of trust is often related to the acceptance of one another's knowledge claims; however, she also argues that trust-building without shared belief is possible through acknowledging pluralist realism (no one method or frame can help us understand everything about the world). We suggest that Indigenous languages should be learned by outside researchers as much as possible, both to allow a deeper understanding of knowledge and also as a gesture of respect. 'Speaking the same language' doesn't automatically create trust, but the act of researchers and consultants using an Indigenous language indexes greater respect and willingness to accommodate the other, and perhaps furthers processes of reconciliation (Little Bear 2000). Language usage can be encouraged

within the consultation project by using Indigenous research methodologies and Indigenous theoretical frames such as a Two Roads Approach (L'Hommecourt et al. 2022) or a Two-Eyed Seeing approach, which support a mutual understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants (Van Bewer et al. 2021). Finally, the use of Indigenous languages in research and consulting is an attempt to shift a long-held hegemony of colonial languages — and the hegemony of monolingualism as the norm — being used in data gathering, reporting and the dissemination of results. Having multiple 'common languages' requires challenging the ideology of monolingualism — that only one language should be used to communicate at a time (and that one language is sufficient); the usage of Indigenous languages could potentially intervene in power relations between governmental representatives and Indigenous communities by providing space for distinct worldviews and reality perceptions.

Following these reasons, we present two case studies (the use of the concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, or IQ in Nunavut governance and industry; and the concept of Î-kanatak Askiy, a Cree term, by the National Energy board) that highlight attempts to incorporate Indigenous linguistic concepts into policy. We reveal how the incorporation of Indigenous languages as concepts been proposed and incorporated (or not) into environmental policy at the federal level in ways relevant to the proposed CNC concept. While these examples show some shortcomings, we suggest upon how they reveal three positive implications for meaningful engagement via language: a) the use of a local Indigenous language indexes and supports the adoption of a localized approach in engagement; b) Indigenous terms bring different worldviews and realities, understanding of which provides opportunities for reconciliation, and such terms index the difference between Indigenous and Eurocentric values, governance and legal traditions; c) language use in all stages of the community engagement process can support of existing efforts for language revitalization and reconciliation. On these points, we then provide connections to the 94 Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (2015) as well as to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP (2007).

We have argued that meaningful engagement in the CNC context must involve *acknowledging that language matters*, on multiple levels. Meaningful engagement means not assuming English and/or French should be the languages of engagement simply due to their political and social dominance or their enshrinement as federal official languages. Community members should have the choice to use their Indigenous languages if they deem it appropriate. Receiving information in the Indigenous language of the community — through translation, as Wright (2020) clarifies — allows for people to communicate nuances and meanings about culturally and environmentally relevant topics that may not be present or easily expressed in English or French. Using Indigenous languages wherever possible in the consulting process (and deemed appropriate by Indigenous community members, of course) can help shed light on worldview in ways that might be otherwise missed; language use helps fully accommodate and integrate Indigenous knowledges into the consultation process. As Indigenous knowledge may become "lost in translation," stressing the importance of outside researchers and consultants learning as much of an Indigenous language as possible fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of pluralistic realism (Fellows 2017).

While different Indigenous communities and individuals will not always agree on how (or whether) reconciliation with non-Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government is possible to achieve, some do hold the belief that the kinds of learning and socialization that happen through acquiring a language can be seen as a step in the right direction (Little Bear 2000). This means that sometimes, instead of expecting Indigenous people to translate their knowledge into English or French, consultants should be prepared to learn and use (or at least become very familiar with) Indigenous languages to a greater degree to meet speakers halfway. Meaningful engagement can thus also be enacted through creating policy recommendations that help to support ongoing language revitalization projects — and thus broader processes of reconciliation and decolonization/Indigenization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Northern Corridor (CNC) concept is about establishing a new multi-modal (road, rail, pipeline, electrical transmission and communication) transportation right-of-way through Canada's north and near north (Sulzenko and Fellows 2016). The CNC program integrates formal academic research and a strategy of engagement with potentially impacted communities (Fellows et al. 2020).

Finding common ground among Indigenous peoples, governments, and industry on engagement and consultation practices is imperative to the future of resource development and the Canadian economy, and ultimately to the reconciliation of the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Canada (Boyd and Lorefice 2018). In stakeholders' relations, the difference in languages creates barriers for cooperation that affect trust-building processes. Speaking the native language of project participants is an important factor for trust by raising cultural awareness among stakeholders, which diminishes barriers to cooperation (Koch 2018). Even if governments, researchers and industry representatives are not fluent in the respective Indigenous language, attempts to learn it communicates good intention and willingness to do hard (and meaningful) work. In this regard, languages are more than just tools; all communicative systems also hold both individual and cultural identities, histories and memory, and encode knowledge in specific ways.

As we finish writing this paper, it is halfway through 2022 — the UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages. UNESCO (2022) reminds us on their website that "languages play a crucial role in the daily lives of people, not only as a tool for communication, education, social integration and development, but also as a repository for each person's unique identity, cultural history, traditions and memory." Thus, understanding Indigenous languages means connecting with cultural identities and histories of Indigenous Peoples — as well as the myriad forms of Indigenous knowledges held by these languages. We feel this is a fitting reminder as we begin an article exploring the ways in which Indigenous language can contribute to meaningful engagement in research and consulting, particularly within the context of the Canadian Northern Corridor (CNC) concept. Strengthening, revitalizing and protecting Indigenous languages is also stated as a goal of the UNDRIP implementation process (Government of Canada 2022), and features prominently in the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's report (2015). We argue that Indigenous language policy should be implemented holistically, and the languages usage should be incorporated not only in the Department of Canadian Heritage initiatives, but also stressed as a vital element of research, consultation and community engagement activities.

In this piece, we focus on exploring the reasons why the usage of Indigenous languages is an important element of meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities in the consultation and research project. We address how the use of Indigenous languages could be incorporated into the engagement and consultation processes (e.g., as part of large infrastructural projects such as the CNC) and explain how they can make these processes more meaningful for Indigenous communities and individuals, as well as the outside researchers and consultants. Through an examination of past and ongoing attempts to do so, we identify in our policy recommendations how the entire process of community engagement can align with the usage of Indigenous languages, and how such endeavours might be implemented. As we have alluded to above, we also reflect on how the usage of Indigenous languages uplifts Indigenous worldviews, and how it can possibly support the reconciliation process.

We write this paper as one non-Indigenous and one Indigenous author who have experience with social sciences research on language and political science, respectively, in the Circumpolar world (Canada and Siberia). We have drawn upon literature primarily focused on Indigenous languages and ecological knowledge in Northern Canada, as we are writing in the context of the Canadian Northern Corridor (CNC) Project, but we have also drawn upon work from other Indigenous research and researchers in North America as well as other regions of the world where relevant. We have also sought to highlight the work of Indigenous scholars as much as possible. As Joly and Westman (2017) have noted, more Indigenous-led research is very much needed on impacts of industry on ecosystems in northern Canada.

We begin by defining what we mean by "meaningful engagement" and provide an overview of the Indigenous language situation in Canada, with a focus on the northern regions that the CNC corridor would impact. Following this we cover five reasons why language matters, and then provide some case studies for examining the obstacles and benefits related to using Indigenous terminology and concepts in policy. We then present our recommendations and best practice suggestions. We conclude with a revisitation of the concept of meaningful engagement to reinforce how the policy recommendations support this approach.

1.1 WHAT IS MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT?

Before going further into linguistic details and case studies, we must explore what we mean by "meaningful engagement." In discussing what constitutes "deep" or "meaningful consultation" from a legal standpoint when writing about Crown consultations, Wright (2020) notes that this can differ by context — there are different legal situations among Indigenous communities and land across the country (e.g., treaty and non-treaty), not to mention great diversity among Indigenous cultures, even from community to community among those who share a language. It is difficult to neatly summarize what this might look like in the Canadian Northern Corridor project, which would impact numerous distinct First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities — but he does state it should include:

> […] *good faith* on the part of both parties, a focus on addressing the specific concerns raised, *two-way dialogue*, early notice, participation funding, substantive responses to information request (including *translation* in some

contexts), *openness to accommodation* and mitigation measures, a *view to accommodation* of conflicting interests, *demonstrable integration* of Indigenous communities' concerns [...] (Wright 2020, 29; authors' italics)

We can highlight several notions he mentions here to apply to what we are calling "meaningful engagement." In our context, meaningful engagement can be expressed through actions that seek to challenge the hegemony of Euro-Western approaches to science, research and communication, and that permit and support Indigenous languages and perspectives as equals.

As will be evidenced in cases presented in this paper, Euro-Western and Indigenous worldviews do not always correspond; they are separate worldviews and come from distinct epistemological and ontological perspectives. Eurocentric worldviews constitute the current legislative and regulatory framework on environmental policy in Canada.[1] Crucially for this study, they position language as a separate concept from nature and land. Conversely, Indigenous worldviews are based on a reciprocal, interdependent and learning relationship with the earth (Tully 2018, cited in Reed et al. 2022). A meaningful engagement approach takes these Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies seriously as ways of knowing and understanding the world, rather than treating them as secondary, 'alternative' and fragmentary sources to be cited and considered only when they align with Euro-Western science — or leaving them out altogether (Baker and Westman 2018).[2]

Taking these epistemologies seriously is the foundation for a *two-way dialogue*, and acting in *good faith*; thus, meaningful engagement *works to accommodate* those perspectives and to *integrate* them deeply. Fundamentally, a meaningful engagement approach *recognizes power inequalities* between Indigenous communities and the Canadian government, industry leaders, as well as other institutions, and seeks to create ways for communities to highlight their own perspectives and engage with industry and government on their own terms, rather than simply accepting those put forth by outsiders. Studies such as the report by Joly and Westman (2017) analyzing how research and consultation is carried out within the oil and gas industry have identified language as a critical gap; discussing consultation processes with Cree, Dene and Métis communities in Alberta's northern boreal, they specifically note the lack of transparent communication from companies to communities, and which is rarely translated into Indigenous languages, just as Wright (2020) noted in his analysis as well. Joly and Westman (2017, 28) also point out that more research is needed to better investigate the language and land connection; they ask, "how are communities adapting and responding to environmental impacts that also entail profound spiritual and cultural impacts?" This concept of land-language connection will be explored in depth over the course of the paper.

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[1] As Baker and Westman (2018) argue, traditional land-use consultations and EIA reports reflect a mainstream settler colonial viewpoint, in which development and progress are viewed to be beneficial and Indigenous traditions can be refined to points on maps that could be avoided or mitigated with few long-term impacts. EIA are written based on Western scientific standards, and language and proponents do not ask communities to identify their own key issues including risks and uncertainties (Aksamit et al. 2019). Baker and Westman (2018) state that Indigenous control over the assessments and determination of its findings would be beneficial for reconciliation and true sustainability.

[2] For a case study on how the Arctic Council has (or hasn't) integrated Traditional Ecological Knowledge into its policies and activities, see Sidorova (2020) on how it often functions as 'lip service' rather than as a deeper base.

1.2 THE SITUATION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN CANADA

In 2016, approximately 213,230 people reported speaking an Indigenous language in Canada, about 0.6 per cent of the population (Statistics Canada 2017).[3] The number of languages spoken in the country as reported in the last published census (at the time of writing) was over seventy, but some people tended to group certain languages together and this complicates the count (e.g., there are multiple dialects or varieties of Cree, but not everyone specified which variety — Plains, Moose, etc. — they speak). While some languages have many more speakers than others (e.g., compare Cree, Inuktut[4] and Ojibwe — each with tens of thousands of speakers — to languages with a few dozen speakers) all these languages are at risk of being silenced if efforts at maintenance and revitalization are not continued. It is notable that within the Northern Corridor region, we find speakers of three of the most populous languages: Cree, with approximately 96,500 speakers; Inuktut, with over 42,000; Ojibwe, with 28,000). We also find languages with a range of smaller speaker numbers; e.g., Michif, spoken primarily in the prairie provinces has 1,170, whereas Tlingit, a language of the northern British Columbian coast and the southern Yukon has around 255 self-reported speakers (Statistics Canada 2017).

North American Indigenous languages are highly diverse, with the greatest diversity of languages found on the west coast of Canada. Within the proposed Canadian Northern Corridor region and closely adjacent areas, we find representatives of multiple language families (groups of related languages that share a common ancestral language); these are the Algonquin languages (e.g., the Cree and Ojibwemowin/Anishinaabemowin dialect continua[5]), Inuit languages (e.g., Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun), Michif (a mixed language spoken in many Métis communities that primarily combines elements of Cree and French), Na-Dene (e.g., Gwich'in, Dëne Sųłınë́), Salish (e.g., ItNuxalkmc or Nuxalk), Tsimshianic (e.g., Nisga'a, Sm'álgyax), Wakashan (e.g., Haíłzaqvḷa or Heiltsuk; Xā'islak'ala or Haisla). In the rest of Canada, we can also find other entire families, including the Iroquoian languages (e.g. Kanien'kéha or Mohawk), Siouan languages (e.g., Nakoda), as well as language isolates like Tlingit[6], Ktunaxa (Kutenai) and Haida which do not have any known relationships with particular language families. To provide a comparison to help capture the differences of these languages, we could say that the Cree languages are as different from Inuktitut as English and Japanese, as are any two Indigenous languages from different families.

The loss of Indigenous linguistic diversity in Canada is connected to the assimilatory policies and actions toward Indigenous cultures as a whole; in particular, cultural genocide and linguicide were spurred on through the educational system, especially that of residential schools. Numerous testimonies of residential school students recall the ways in which punishment for being caught speaking their first languages was meted out (Fontaine 2010, Miller 1996, Legacy of Hope Foundation n.d., Truth and Reconciliation Council of Canada 2015); government officials such as John A. MacDonald gave direct statements that this

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[3]   At the time of writing, in 2022, the 2020 Census results on Indigenous languages were not yet available. The most recent published data was from 2016 (Statistics Canada 2017).

[4]   Inuktut comprises all varieties of Inuit languages spoken in Canada (e.g., Inuktitut, Innuinaqtun and Inuvialuktun, and dialects thereof). See Inuktut Tusaalanga (n.d.) for a map.

[5]   A dialect continuum is a group of language varieties spread out over a geographical area, where languages spoken adjacent to each other tend to be mutually intelligible to a high degree, and languages with greater physical distance tend to be less similar.

[6]   Statistics Canada (2017) considers Tlingit to be a language isolate, but many linguists place it in the Na-Dene family.

was indeed their goal, i.e., "Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men" (House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada 1883).

Being removed from their home communities and then facing punishment for speaking their home languages meant that those who survived residential schooling were often reticent to speak their languages — if trauma they suffered had not already led to language loss. Thus, many individuals who were forced to endure this system did not transmit their language to their own children. Currently, in some communities, the only fluent speakers are Elders who may be geographically isolated from one another as well, which had led to fewer opportunities to transmit the language to others. In other cases, stigma and shame have remained attached to these languages due to residential school experiences and systemic racism against Indigenous people in the country, meaning that even people who still know these languages may be reticent to speak them with anyone.

The loss of linguistic abilities for these children led to gaps in cultural transmission; losing their Indigenous languages meant that children were often unable to understand monolingual parents and other Elders who held important cultural knowledge — spiritual, legal, and ecological, which are all pertinent areas that together inform the depth and breadth of Indigenous knowledge systems. Residential schools in Canada were run predominantly by Christian denominations, and the assimilatory measures on the religious front also dismissed and devalued Indigenous spiritual beliefs, if not outright demonized them, leading to the loss of interconnection of spirituality with both languages and the land. Indigenous knowledge systems are more holistic than Euro-Western scientific traditions and tend to reject a distinct separation between the material and spiritual (e.g., Berkes (2009) on 'sacred ecology'). The Cree researcher Michael Hart (2010) states that because Indigenous worldviews emerged due to the people's close relationship with the environment, one common aspect in many Indigenous cultures is the recognition of a spiritual realm understood to be interconnected with the physical realm (Cajete 2000; Meyer 2008; Rice 2005, as cited in Hart 2010). Due to the Eurocentric focus in research, far too often the kinds of nuanced relationships that Indigenous community members still have with sentient ecologies[7] (Anderson 2000) are overlooked in environmental impact assessment reports that disregard other ontological perspectives on the world, and default purely to those of Euro-Western science (Baker and Westman 2018).

Indigenous cultural genocide, as referred to by Chief Justice Rt. Hon. Beverley McLachlin, led to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) report, including multiple calls to action focusing on support from the Canadian government and other federal institutions (Jewell 2016, 99). However, the calls to action are meant to also be guidance and inspiration for all citizens of Canada to apply to their lives in the ways they have the power and ability to do so. Thus, numerous other institutions not explicitly called out in the document can also use these recommendations as starting points for reconciling the power imbalances and historical abuses that Indigenous peoples have experienced; we argue that this is a productive path forward for consultants and others doing work in industry and infrastructure.

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[7]   Anderson (2000, 116) defines the term as the mutual interrelation between person and place; we would suggest that language is part of that interrelation.

At present, nearly all speakers of these languages (save for some very old and very young speakers in some regions) also speak either or both English and French. However, as we will discuss, just because most community members do speak one of the official languages of the country should not mean that we automatically should use that language in consultation and data collection. The reasons for this are both practical and symbolic, and we will cover them in detail in sections to follow.

1.3 CURRENT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE POLICIES

As mentioned, many of these communities of speakers are actively engaged in language revitalization processes that vary according to the needs and desires of the specific communities; in fact, in the early 2000s, language-related census data revealed that while many people were not learning Indigenous languages as first languages, many more were learning them as a second languages (Norris 2007). This was a marked difference from the previous decade. We suggest that focusing on language to foster meaningful engagement can also support the kinds of learning processes and revitalization projects already underway in these communities. Examples of how language goals are tied to processes of reconciliation (e.g., the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation committee) as well as other frameworks (e.g., those proposed by the United Nations) will be covered further on.

Overall, it is crucial to discover as many approaches as possible to elevate the status of the languages from the perspectives of speakers, non-speakers and outsiders, and this can to some extent be achieved through creating resources for literacy in the language (Davis 2017). To achieve that, collaboration of all levels of government is required at every stage of language policy planning and implementation (Blair and Laboucan 2006, as cited in Davis 2017). Within Canada's three territories, different approaches have been taken regarding language policy. In Yukon, federal and territorial governments focused more toward First Nations' self-determination and self-government, which resulted in attempts have an Indigenous strategy for government programs and services (Meek 2009). This policy strategy led to the emergence and incorporation of a Yukon-wide language policy. The Yukon Languages Act (1988) was adopted, shaping an environment in which French, English and any Indigenous language could be used in the legislature and elsewhere (Meek 2009). As Meek (2009) also notes, this language policy resulted in the representation of Indigenous language from a naturalized component of Indigenous identity to a counterhegemonic, democratic perception of the Yukon Territory. A similar strategy was taken in the Northwest Territories, which has designated eleven languages as official, nine of them Indigenous.[8]

At the time of Nunavut's creation, Inuktitut was established as co-official alongside English and French, but there are multiple factors that have restricted recognition and promotion of the Inuit languages in government. These factors include Eurocentric bilingualism at the federal level, the dominance of English in the territorial public service, the wider cultural forces encouraging the use of English among younger people in Nunavut, and restricted availability of Inuit languages curriculum resources in the territorial school system; yet, if Nunavut language policy is effective, it could open the door for more complex and diverse

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[8]   They include the Na-Dene languages, including Chipewyan (i.e., Dëne Sųłıné Yatıé), Gwich'in (i.e., Dinjii Zhu' Ginjìk), North Slavey (i.e., Sahtúot'ı̨nę Yatı̨), South Slavey (i.e., Dene Zhatié) and Tłı̨chǫ Yatı̨ı̨ as well as the three Inuit languages (Inuktitut, Innuinaqtun and Inuvialuktun), the Algonquian language Cree, and Michif.

ways to integrate Indigenous and settler languages in policy (Timpson 2009). However, as we will cover in section 3.2, there have also been obstacles to incorporating Inuktitut concepts as well language into government policy; the effort to promote the usage of Inuktitut in the Government of Nunavut, including the premier's statement that all civil servants would be expected to speak Inuktitut within five years (of 1999) was largely symbolic (Tester and Irniq 2007).

We present these examples of language policy in the territories to show that territorial governments cannot do it alone; support for Indigenous languages must come from all levels of government and also from other institutions. Revitalization of language and culture is a central part of the Calls to Action put forth in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee; consultation can work in support of reconciliation in several ways by considering language as a key factor. For instance, in many Indigenous communities, even members of the younger generations who do still know some of their Indigenous languages may lack the same extensive cultural and environmental knowledge that would have previously been passed down from their Elders, partly due to the inability to speak and understand their ancestral language(s) to the same degree (Khawaja 2021). The focus on using Indigenous languages in Indigenous communities in research and consulting also can be an indirect factor in encouraging the use of these languages among younger generations.

2. WHY DOES LANGUAGE MATTER?

As Blackfoot researcher Leroy Little Bear (2000) explains, language embodies the way a society thinks; through learning and speaking a particular language, a person engages with the collective thought processes of a community or society. In this section, we explain the language-land connection, or how land and language are embedded within many Indigenous communities' and individuals' language ideologies[9] and must be considered in tandem rather than as separate concepts or entities. We also cover how past federal language policy in Canada tended not to recognize or support a holistic approach to the language-land connection. Following this, we explain the connections between language and maintaining the integrity of knowledge, and ensuring meanings are not elided or lost when translating Indigenous concepts; we provide some brief examples that will be complemented with two longer case studies in Section 3 of the paper.

We then provide some discussion of recent literature that discusses the role of language in establishing trust, as well as the role of language in the reconciliation process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous institutions and individuals. We cover the overall intersections of language and power and how the implementation of Indigenous language usage in the consulting process can challenge the hegemonic power.

2.1 LANGUAGE AND LAND CONNECTIONS

While it is always important to be mindful of the great diversity between Indigenous languages and cultures worldwide, it is also striking to see the similarities in how both land and language are ideologically conceptualized as linked together in places as diverse as North America, Siberia, Amazonia, Oceania and other regions (Ferguson and Weaselboy

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9   Language ideologies are the culturally mediated beliefs, attitudes and opinions we hold about what language
     is and does in the world, that also affect the ways we use language in a given society (Woolard 2020).

2020). The land-language connection has been recognized by Indigenous peoples in Canada since time immemorial; in a report by the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, the writers conveyed that these connections between land and language implied a responsibility for stewardship as well as linguistic and cultural transmission:

> "The land" is more than the physical landscape; it [also] involves [...] the people's historical and spiritual relationship to their territories. First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages show that the people are not separate from the land. They have a responsibility to protect it and to preserve the sacred and traditional knowledge associated with it. (Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures 2005, ii)

Even earlier, Justice Thomas Berger's (1977) report on the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline stated that the connection of Indigenous Peoples to the land can only be comprehended through their own words (Berger, 1977). For this reason, during the process of conducting the Berger Inquiry, community engagement activities were facilitated in Indigenous languages so "the native people had an opportunity to express themselves in their own languages and in their own way..." (Berger 1977).

Further examples from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars emphasize the importance of Indigenous languages in their capacity to reflect Indigenous communities' relations to the land (Berger 1977, Chiblow 2019, Chiblow 2020, Chiblow and Meighan 2022, Dolseg and Abel 2015, Ferguson and Weaselboy 2020, Perley 2011). Here, we follow Maliseet linguistic anthropologist Bernard Perley (2011, 203) who calls language an "integrated cultural resource": "language itself will be presented as having tangible and intangible properties that need to be carefully managed if cultural integration is to be preserved, maintained, and revitalized." As Chiblow and Meighan (2022) state, since Anishinaabemowin is action-based, learning from activities on the land is paramount for understanding the language, which means that language and the land are closely connected to one another (see also Kimmerer 2013). Similarly, Scobie and Rodgers (2019) suggest developing educational, health and justice initiatives that take place on (or with reference to) the land and involve the Indigenous language in meaningful ways. Regular participation in the land-based activities keeps connections, ways of knowing and understanding ways of being, and relationships strong (Chiblow and Meighan 2022); this idea is the foundation for the land-based pedagogies that many Indigenous communities are engaged in to transmit both language and knowledge (see Indigenous Education — The Centre for Collaboration 2021, Mashford-Pringle and Stewart 2019, Rorick 2018, among others). As Cree educator Belinda Daniels (Indigenous Education — The Centre for Collaboration 2021) notes, the focus is having a chance to "speak Cree with Cree people in a Cree environment." This often takes the form of combining language learning camps with culture camps "in the bush" — or, in the case of the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning in the Northwest Territories, a whole "bush university"[10] — to access these land-centered ways of knowing and learn an Indigenous language while acquiring land-based skills simultaneously.

As Mark Fettes (2019, 265) summarizes, "In this context, language is not simply, or even primarily, a medium for group identity and self-expression; it is part of the living web of relations that binds human beings together in the context of a particular place with the land

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[10]   More about the history and goals can be found at Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning (2018).

and the waters and all their fellow inhabitants." Fettes (2019) emphasizes the importance of not just preserving language but maintaining what makes a language meaningful — in this case, a relationship between land and language must be nurtured and supported. Examples of land and language stewardship working synergistically are plentiful; for instance, research with the Taku River Tlingit First Nation in northern British Columbia and the Loon River Cree First Nation in northern Alberta has shown how language revitalization projects often go hand-in-hand with land stewardship and reclamation projects (Schreyer 2008, 2011, 2016; see also Fettes 2019 for an overview). As Schreyer (2011, 36) stresses, "one of the ways in which both Indigenous languages and lands can be sustainably managed is through the inter-weaving of language planning and land planning." Through projects she worked on creating a board game to teach Tlingit place names (and foraging activities) and working on producing Cree storybooks about Loon River (which focused on Elders' environment-focused narratives of topics as they stemmed from a traditional land use study), Schreyer reveals the ways in which learning about land use is linked to developing language use, and vice versa. In discussing the Taku River case of Tlingit-language signs as "performatives of stewardship," Schreyer (2016) notes that in many cases, land claims have historically taken precedence in terms of policy and planning for Indigenous communities, but language planning and usage can be incorporated into land-related endeavours. These examples also point to what Ferguson and Weaselboy (2020) have termed "sustainable relations" between land and language; the care and stewardship of one is inseparable from that of the other.

However, despite the connections that many Indigenous people have been describing, this connection between the land and Indigenous languages is not recognized by the Canadian federal legislation regarding language policy. According to Haque and Patrick (2015), while the Constitution Act (1982) expands on the language rights of French and English speakers, it does not recognize Indigenous language rights, and these trends have continued to be present in both federal law and policy. Language policy initiatives such as the establishment of the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute were supposed to promote Canadian racial and cultural diversity (Haque and Patrick 2015); in December 2002, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced that Canada would create a centre for language revitalization (Haque and Patrick 2015; The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures 2005). As a result, the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (TFALC) was created, which submitted its final report in 2005 (The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures 2005). TFALC comprised a Circle of Experts, a group of knowledgeable and experienced language and cultural leaders, educators and community workers from across Canada (The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures 2005). However, although TFALC consisted of experts, this initiative was not successful; despite their lived knowledge. The experts operated within the framework of existing bureaucratic system that reflected non-Indigenous conceptualization of language policy.

As Haque and Patrick (2015) argue, despite covering many of the key issues around the preservation of Indigenous languages (e.g., the language linkage to cultural identity), TFALC operated mostly within a framework of colonial constitutionalism and did not offer much thinking outside the box. As Fettes (2019) points out, the TFALC report does not make references to the land or any other synonyms; he argues that land and language are not connected in these reports because the Western discourse — and language ideologies

— tends to hold language and world as two separate concepts. Working within the Euro-Western expectations for what 'language policy' conveyed, the writers were focused instead on more 'doable' parts of the language agenda (Fettes 2019). Therefore, to recognize this connection, there should be a deeper philosophical shift to make space for community-based and land-based work (Fettes 2019). Similarly, as Scobie and Rodgers (2019) state, while the concept of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit has been incorporated into Nunavut's Wildlife Act, the Act is focused relatively narrowly on a range of nature conservation issues and the preservation of Inuit language, and culture and related issues of social well-being are not mentioned. Thus, the Nunavut Wildlife Act sees land and language as separate matters, without recognizing that both are tied with lifestyles and practices that enable the human and the more-than-human to flourish alongside one another (Scobie and Rodgers 2019). We argue that language, infrastructure and environmental policies should all recognize that land, nature and Indigenous languages are concepts that cannot be separated.

2.2. LANGUAGE AND KNOWLEDGE INTEGRITY

The language in which we choose to talk about the land and our knowledge about it is also a significant consideration. Languages — even closely related ones — do not exist purely as one-to-one, easily substituted correspondences. As linguistic anthropologists have demonstrated, language is not merely a labelling system of the world; it transmits culture and worldview as well, and we are socialized into ways of being in the world both by language and through language (Sperry et al. 2015). The existence of different cultural systems, reflecting many ways of the seeing the world, means that the translation of concepts from one language to another (especially one with a very different ontological view of the world) may mean that nuances and layers of meaning are lost in the process.

Different languages bring into focus and sometimes, in sociocultural matters, even bring into existence, different kinds of realities, philosophies, behaviours and perceptions (Harre et al. 1999; see Armstrong 2018 re: the Syilx concept of *tmixw*). This matters significantly when attempting to consult and gather data on Indigenous knowledges (e.g., Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or TEK). Even if all the knowledge can be dictated in English, instead of in the Indigenous language, it is possible that key aspects of the TEK system could be neglected and missed, thus presenting an incomplete version of that knowledge. For instance, Parlee and Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation (1998) point out that developing terminology in the local Indigenous language first and then translating these ideas into English helped readers understand what community-based environmental monitoring means from the Dene community perspective in Łutsël K'é (NWT). Similarly, Goulet (1998, 132-133) has mentioned how he employed the use of dual translation — asking for words and phrases provided in English to be translated into Dene Dháh, and vice versa — to compare what each language revealed through the content and structure of these expressions. In Goulet's case, dual translation revealed how his research participants thought about the nature of mind, thoughts and knowledge itself: aspects of a worldview that did not match exactly with an English-speaking Canadian's.

Other researchers, including Chiblow (2019, 2020), have stressed that basing research on Indigenous concepts in Indigenous languages can provide more ethical alternatives

to typically extractive outside research processes, and also invite outside researchers to think differently. There are numerous other examples that can be provided of the necessity of maintaining linguistic integrity, and in Section 3 we present two case studies (the use of the concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, or IQ in Nunavut governance and industry; the concept of Î-kanatak Askiy, a Cree term, by the National Energy Board) that highlight attempts to incorporate Indigenous linguistic concepts into policy. For now, we will present two brief examples that highlight some of the nuances present in one language but not in another.

Thinking of ecological knowledge, we can take an example of plant names in Plains Cree (nêhiyawêwin), which are highly descriptive. This can be especially crucial considering the kinds of poisonous roots one could mistake for a healing one (e.g., one could confuse helpful roots such as those of Angelica with the deadly roots of Spotted Water Hemlock). The Canadian English names for these plants do not mention the roots at all. In Table X we can see the highly elaborate nêhiyawêwin names for some water plants that are harvested for their roots. Two of the plants have aerial parts that look like Spotted Water Hemlock's, so correct identification is vital. nêhiyawêwin terms carry sensory information that the English words do not, to help remind a person how to distinguish the plants.

Table X. Important medicinal root plants in nêhiyawêwin with their literal translations, Common English, and Latin terms (Young et al. 2015)

nêhiyawêwin (Plains Cree) name	Literal Translation	English name	Latin name	Easily confused with toxic Spotted Water Hemlock?
wacaskowîykomawask	(Musk)rat smell root	Angelica	*Angelica genuflexa*	Yes
wacaskomîciwin; wihkes (for short)	(Musk)rat food	Sweet Flag, Calamus	*Acorus americanus*	Root yes; aerial parts no
pakwânâhtik	Empty (hollow) stalk	Cow Parsnip	*Heracleum lanatum*	Yes

Other nêhiyawêwin plant names index the indivisibility between the spiritual and ecological aspects of Indigenous knowledge. Despite its poisonous properties, it has the name manitoskâtâsk, "God's (Spirit's) Carrot." Some healers have noted that in minute properties the powdered root plant could be used externally for healing purposes — the name of manitoskâtâsk reminds people of the plant's strong spirit and the need for most people to be extremely cautious of it (Young et al. 2015, 83).

Examining the choices made in the process of official translation that show inequivalence can be helpful to illustrate similar linguistic nuances. With Inuktitut in Nunavik, Quebec, Daveluy and Ferguson (2009) used the example of a bilingual street sign in Kuujjuaq to show the different worldviews embedded in the translation of a name. In English, the name of the street was Fairview Crescent, while in Inuktitut the word was *Nuitatsiavik.* This word can be broken into three parts: the verbal base *nuita-,* coming into view or becoming visible; *–tsia(q),* to be perfect; and the spatio-temporal marker *–vik.* "Something perfect becoming visible" is somewhat equivalent to a "fair view" (a very common street name in the English-speaking world). However, a fluent Inuktitut speaker commented that the word "nuitatsiavik" was often used not so much about landscapes, but about the appearance of something beautiful and fortunate, such as a seal emerging from below the water's surface. Thus, speaking the language and knowing the usual contexts that such a word would be

used in provides another layer to the word that a non-speaker would not be aware of — seals, being a vital source of sustenance for coastal-dwelling Inuit, are indeed a very "fair view." For more street-name translations revealing different sociohistorically and politically shaped meanings in the Dine language versus English, see Webster (2017).

Place names in general are vital sources of knowledge about land and the relations lived upon it, as evidenced in Schreyer's work on Tlingit (2011, 2016) and Cree (2008, 2011), and numerous other studies. In her work, she found that recording and learning place names was very important to both Tlingit and Cree-speaking communities; this was notable because it was equally significant in the Tlingit community, which had a much lower number of speakers of all generations, and the Cree community, where most adults were fluent in their language. Schreyer (2008) mentions Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Studies, which provides a foundation for integrating land use and language into a 'sense of place.' For example, in the case she describes, over one hundred Cree place names have been recorded. These names could be incorporated into everyday knowledge and 'official' community use to increase community awareness of the relationship of the Cree language to the Loon River Cree First Nation's traditional land use. Enshrining Indigenous place names and historical narratives in descriptions of the territory and using the language in ceremonial and symbolic ways as an indicator of political and cultural identity (Scobie and Rodgers 2019). Change of colonial place names to Indigenous toponyms powerfully signifies the continued presence and recognition of the Indigenous languages, laws and history; in BC, the Nisga'a Final Agreement changed thirty-four place names from English to Nisga'a language, which contributed to the expression of Indigenous governance and laws (Gray and Rück 2019). Indigenous place names are also pedagogical; they can offer lessons on how to live in good relations with others and the land while also indexing both historic and ongoing Indigenous presence (Gray and Rück 2019; see also Schreyer 2011, 2016). Although representing place names on maps does not entirely reflect the rich meanings of time and place in the names, the maps represent a common reference point and offer the potential for all parties to share knowledge about a landscape important to both (Henshaw 2006).

2.3 LANGUAGE IN ESTABLISHING TRUST AND WORKING TOWARD RECONCILIATION

We move now away from language as a way of engaging with land, to explore how language choice helps us in engagements with other human beings. As Fellows (2017) explains, the establishment of trust has usually related to the acceptance of one another's knowledge claims; however, she also argues that trust-building without shared belief is possible. In a case study of Canadian scientists and Inuit community members engaged in polar bear conservation, Fellows (2017) shows that while trust is required for both groups to succeed in their aims, both groups are more likely to demonstrate distrust toward one another. Along with power differentials, part of the reason for mistrust stems from the vastly different epistemologies among Euro-Western scientists and Inuit knowledge-holders. The conceptual possibility of pluralist realism is raised regarding the issue of how to gain or give trust when neither group is likely to accept the knowledge claims of the other as true. Pluralist realism — which argues that plurality of scientific disciplines and investigations are beneficial as it is theoretically possible that reality itself cannot be

captured under a monist model — may be an asset for trust-building (Fellows 2017). Thus, in an environment where the groups do not share the same beliefs, it is possible to facilitate a discussion that could support pluralistic realities without pressuring any stakeholder to accept other group's knowledge claims.

Language, too, is a conceptual resource that can foster trust-building. It is a long-accepted norm among some researchers, e.g., linguistic and cultural anthropologists, that community languages should be learned as much as possible, even if there are other national or international lingua franca in use in a region that both the researcher and community members also know. This is partially for deeper understanding of knowledge being shared, but also as a gesture of respect. In terms of language use, we argue that language can help enable trust not because 'speaking the same language' automatically allows this, but because the act of researchers and consultants using an Indigenous language indexes greater respect and willingness to accommodate the other; as well, it could signal an interest in the Indigenous culture and efforts to understand it on a deeper level. Following the comments of Kainai scholar Little Bear (2000) on language as an intrinsic factor for working toward reconciliation, we suggest that just as with acknowledging pluralist realism, a pluralist attitude toward language usage can also potentially allow for greater trust. Thus, we suggest that use of Indigenous languages (alongside English and/or French if necessary) at various stages of the research process could help to foster feelings of trust and thus further a sense of meaningful engagement. As we will discuss in further sections of this paper, this involves the employment of (and support for) fluent Indigenous language speakers as well as learners within the community, the efforts among researchers and consultants conducting the data collection to try to learn and use an Indigenous language as much as possible in various situations, and a focus on documenting both data and concepts in an Indigenous language (and paying attention to linguistic practices themselves as well).

Other studies have also demonstrated that language choices tend to present challenges when considered in connection with socialization processes, but less so when focusing on the technical features of work; according to Henderson (2010) and Henderson and Louihala-Salminen (2011), using English as a shared working language both destroys and creates language boundaries. On one hand, having distinct communication patterns or meta-communicative routines used by team members from different language communities affects interpersonal perceptions and attitudes, resulting in increase of uncertainty and ambiguity and inhibiting the creation of trust. Yet, on the other hand, these studies also revealed that if communication is organized efficiently, language differences can be a key factor contributing to team building and group cohesion and even become a source of trust (Henderson 2010; Henderson and Louihala-Salminen 2011). English may be the shared working language in cross-cultural communication, but additional language and communication skills beyond fluency in English are needed for a trusting environment to be established (Henderson 2010). This suggests the need to make space for multiple languages in the research or consulting space, as different languages may perform different functions within the different kinds of interactions that occur. Consultants knowing at least some of the Indigenous language could be, in some contexts, primarily a window into deeper understanding of the ecological knowledge — in other contexts, a way of potentially expressing good intentions through the willingness to accommodate and show interest in learning. The process of fostering trust through Indigenous language use will certainly vary

by community and by individuals, and will be shaped by prior experiences with residential schools as well as the kind of interactions had with other researchers — nevertheless, we argue it is worth exploring as part of the consulting process in every case. This paper is mainly aspirational; the implementation of policy recommendations we propose here may require significant reconsiderations of current consultation/engagement processes in Canada, as the current Euro-Canadian legislative system does not reflect and accommodate Indigenous worldviews. The process of incorporating of Indigenous languages into Indigenous consultation/community engagement practices requires significant systemic changes. Nevertheless, to make community engagement more meaningful, we strongly encourage consultants who work with Indigenous communities to have training in anthropology and to learn Indigenous languages.

Language usage can be encouraged within the consultation project by using Indigenous research methodologies. For instance, Sharing Circles allow incorporation of experiential learning based on storytelling, which is respectful of and includes Indigenous protocols, values and beliefs important to the specific community (Lavallee 2009; Tachine et al. 2016). Facilitators in Sharing Circles have reported that they feel confident talking about, practising and teaching about their culture (Marsh et al. 2020). Sharing Circles have also been combined with a Two Roads Approach (L'Hommecourt et al. 2022) or a Two-Eyed Seeing approach, which support a mutual understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants (Van Bewer et al. 2021), in line with the pluralist realism discussed by Fellows. From *etuaptmumk*, a Mi'kmaw term, Two-Eyed Seeing encourages researchers to use 'one eye' to focus on the Indigenous worldview or perspective, and the other to focus simultaneously on the non-Indigenous (Reid et al. 2020). Sharing Circles provide in-depth Indigenous engagement that respects Indigenous values and protocols and allows Indigenous communities to share their inputs in accordance with local cultural norms and protocols. Use of multiple languages should be encouraged within these spaces, with translation provided if necessary.

The use of Indigenous languages in research contexts is an attempt to shift a long-held hegemony of colonial languages — and the hegemony of monolingualism as the norm — being used in data gathering and reporting and disseminating results. In the next section, we focus on why it is important and meaningful to disrupt the dominance of English and French in the data-gathering process, as well as to consider a multilingual approach in such scenarios.

2.4 LANGUAGE, POLITICS AND POWER

As discussed in Section 1.2, control over language has been a brutal instrument in the cultural genocide and assimilation of Indigenous peoples in Canada as well as other parts of the world. Indigenous languages were targeted early in the colonial process as subject to suppression; it was clear to imperialist powers that language was a source of power as well as a vehicle for the transmission of culture.

Several language ideologies commonly held within Euro-Western academia (and by many Canadians more broadly) thus need to be challenged in order to understand why it is critical to rectify this power imbalance. Firstly, because languages do not all have one-to-one correspondences in vocabulary, the idea arises that the 'lacking' language is somehow less sophisticated or advanced (and should not be used). For instance, to say that because Cree

speakers don't have a directly, easily translated word for the English term 'sustainability' their language is 'lacking' assumes that Cree and English worldviews are identical and Cree 'less advanced' for not having the word(s) to refer to such a concept — and thus, this language should not be used in discussing environmental policy matters. This deficit model erases the distinctiveness of Cree culture and language, as well as the worldviews that it expresses, as it assumes English as default as well as 'more advanced' while erasing the fact there are concepts that Cree possesses that do refer to similar ideas and possess nuances English does not, due to the differing cultural epistemologies and ontologies. It is necessary to consider how people do talk about something in a language, rather than assuming they do not talk about it because there is no easy translation; documenting how *do* people speak about something contributes to maintaining the integrity of the Indigenous knowledge.

This means retaining and using Indigenous terminology as much as possible in research and policy publications (see examples in Section 3). It means conveying the concepts that do not always easily map onto Euro-Western ones and retaining that integrity. For instance, in discussing Cree worldview principles, *wahkohtowin* (also written as *wâhkôhtowin*, and sometimes translated as 'kinship' or 'relationality') often comes to mind. It is not quite the same as 'ecology' but carries similar connotations in capturing the relations that beings have to other beings in a place. Donald (2016, 11) notes that wahkohtowin might be explained as a kind of "ethical relationality [...] an ecological understanding of organic connectivity that becomes readily apparent to us as human beings when we honour the sacred ecology that supports all life and living." Wildcat (2018: 14) encapsulates it as a system of relatedness between all things that have spirit (i.e., everything), marked by obligations and responsibilities (see also McAdam 2015); Michif researcher Zoe Todd (2016), who explores freshwater human-fish relationships in Western and Northern Canada, applies wahkohtowin to her research process, and stresses the importance here of always beginning from a place rooted in an Indigenous concept. It cannot simply be overlaid onto Western understandings of biology or ecology, or environment, as none of them capture the same elements of meaning.

This kind of work also means thinking bilingually and normalizing the use of multiple languages in both the work of research and consulting as well as in any writing that results from it. Pluralist realism also entails the plurality of language. As applied linguists and linguistic anthropologists have noted, it is very much a usual part of bilinguals' everyday speech practices to mix languages, often in order to capture the nuances of an expression that 'works better' or comes more easily to them in one language than in another (see Grosjean 2010). Some scholars refer to the use of multiple languages while speaking or writing as "translanguaging" — moving across languages — or using one's entire linguistic repertoire in the same speech event (see Wei 2018 for an overview). Encouraging people to use whichever language or languages they feel most comfortable speaking at the moment, rather than either explicitly or implicitly suggesting one 'common language' may be used, is a way to challenge the idea of English or French as the accepted default and allows for the subversion of the linguistic hegemony of colonial languages while also perhaps enhancing trust by supporting people's linguistic choices. If elements are not understood by some participants, balanced bilinguals (i.e., those with the most fluency in all languages being used) can step in to help translate and explain where necessary.

Having multiple 'common languages' requires challenging the ideology of monolingualism — that only one language should be used to communicate at a time (and that one language is sufficient); research has shown that the use of monolingual digital interfaces directly shapes the likelihood that even bilinguals will engage in monolingual interactions (Pérez-Quiñones and Salas 2021). However, employing multiple languages supports the notion that reality can be pluralistic. For instance, the deliberate use of bilingualism at a conference in Norway, which involved Indigenous participants, made the subtle intervention in the conference space (Medby 2021). The use of the North Sámi language preceding English at an Arctic geopolitics conference subverted the dominant narrative of English as the lingua franca of academia and international politics and offered an articulation of Arctic geopolitics in a plural sense rather than making a claim of singular meaning (Medby 2021). In this regard, it is possible to see how the usage of Indigenous languages could potentially intervene in power relations between governmental representatives and Indigenous communities by providing space for distinct worldviews and reality perceptions.

3. CASE STUDIES OF INDIGENOUS TERMS INCORPORATION INTO POLICY

We present here an analysis of two recent cases in which Indigenous language concepts have been proposed and incorporated (or not) into environmental policy at the federal level. We selected these case studies based on the following criteria: 1) relevance of Indigenous engagement policies to the CNC multimodal infrastructure development concept — road, rail, pipeline, electrical transmission and communication; in these case studies — energy and shipping infrastructure development; 2) the geographical location of case studies — 10 percent of pipelines regulated by the Canada Energy Regulator (2021) (NWT, BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, QC, NB and NS) and Nunavut — which is relevant to the proposed CNC concept.[11] First, we discuss the Cree term 'Î-kanatak Askiy' within the context of the National Energy Board/Canada Energy Regulator, and then the Inuktitut term Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and its incorporation into governance of Nunavut, followed by reflections on what we can learn from these cases overall.

3.1 THE (LACK OF) INCLUSION OF Î-KANATAK ASKIY

The Report of the Expert Panel on the Modernization of the National Energy Board 'Forward, Together. Enabling Canada's Clean, Safe and Secure Energy Future' (National Energy Board 2017a, b) introduced the Cree concept Î-kanatak Askiy, which means 'Keeping the Land Pure.' Moser (2018: 7; Cardinal and Hildebrant 2000; Kovach 2009) notes that this concept is connected to *pimacihowin*, which is "based on the holistic view of the balanced economical, physical and spiritual relationships between all interactions."[12]

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11   The Canadian Northern Corridor proposed concept follows the boreal forest in the northern part of the West, including along the Mackenzie Valley, and then southeast from the Churchill area to northern Ontario and the Ring of Fire area; the corridor would then traverse northern Quebec to Labrador, with augmented ports (Sulzenko and Fellows 2016).

12   Similarly, the Métis Nation of Alberta also uses the term askiy (earth or land in Cree) Initiative, which refers to a series of monitoring projects that are focused on monitoring plants, fish and wildlife in Alberta (Métis Nation of Alberta 2022).

The concept of Î-kanatak Askiy was encouraged to be implemented in the context of ensuring the safety and integrity of over 73,000 km of existing federally regulated hydrocarbon pipelines (NEB 2017a). The Indigenous term was selected due to the testimony of Indigenous Peoples from across Canada, who encouraged the NEB to take a leading role in protecting the environment on behalf of generations who will follow the present generation (NEB 2017a). In their report, the NEB experts stated that they were looking forward to seeing this Indigenous worldview enter mainstream environmental discourse and environmental systems (NEB 2017a).

Section 5, Î-kanatak Askiy Operations (Keeping the Land Pure), in the Volume II Annex to this NEB report also emphasizes the importance of clear communication in the CETC communication and the usage of plain language accessible for non-specialists (NEB 2017b). The government was encouraged to provide transparency of monitoring information, incident reports and follow-up with citizens. The government was also recommended to enter formal agreements with Indigenous nations, who wish to participate, to deliver local Indigenous energy infrastructure monitoring programs, which were viewed as a crucial input to existing monitoring tools and systems (NEB 2017b). Therefore, the use of plain language, clear communication, transparency and involvement of Indigenous communities in energy regulatory processes via Indigenous monitoring programs were considered essential in the Î-kanatak Askiy. It was not, however, specified in which language such communications would occur (English and French likely being the default assumptions) or if they would be translated into any Indigenous languages.

However, as the annual reports released by the NEB and then by the CER demonstrate, although most of the content of this strategy has been integrated into Indigenous engagement policies, the usage of the term Î-kanatak Askiy was discontinued. The 2017-18 NEB report indicates that even before the NEB modernization report, Indigenous monitoring program development had already been discussed at the NEB. The 2018-19 CER report shows that implemented changes in Indigenous engagement strategies such as Indigenous monitoring and cultural competency workshops corresponded with Î-kanatak Askiy objectives; yet, the term Î-kanatak Askiy was no longer used, and no explanation was offered by the CER. According to 2019-2020 CER Report, the new initiatives in Indigenous engagement policy continued to be developed and facilitated, but, again, Î-kanatak Askiy term was not mentioned anywhere in the report. The 2020-2021 CER Annual Report reported about ensuring the participation of Indigenous Monitors in its regulatory oversight work and finalized an agreement with BC Oil and Gas Commission about the Aboriginal Liaison Program (CER 2021). Other CER activities were related to Indigenous Monitors and organizing Indigenous Awareness activities for CER staff. So, in 2020-21, Indigenous Monitors participation expanded to oversight activities but the Î-kanatak askiy concept still was not included in the report.

Overall, the NEB/CER Indigenous Engagement activities followed the goals, principles and objectives proposed in the 2017 Expert Panel on Modernization report due to the establishment of the IAMCs and the IACs, and facilitation of cultural competency workshops. But, for some reason, the original title of this strategy is missing in all NEB and CER reports, which follow the 2017 NEB Expert Panel report. The section titles relevant to Î-kanatak askiy goals have been changed to "Engagement," "Indigenous Engagement" and "Safety and Environment Oversight."

This inspires the question of how the Indigenous Engagement's policy implementation by the CER and energy industry in general could have been different if Î-kanatak Askiy remained as a concept in the CER Operations guidelines. Perhaps the spirit of such an approach could have been captured under the other English terms, or perhaps not; it suggests that again there has been a reversion to assuming a default Euro-Western perspective of conservation, ecosystems, etc., or assuming that Indigenous ideas of such conceptions are identical, when in fact, they may not be. Pimacihowin, the broader Cree concept that informs Î-kanatak Askiy, is not easily conveyed in English. It is interwoven with "thought, language, and ways of life" (Samson Cree Nation, n.d.); while it is sometimes translated as 'way of life,' it also contains the notion of finding balance in the interactions between all beings (ensuring a good 'way of life' for all living things), based on guiding teachings of Elders and Ancestors (Samson Cree Nation n.d.; see also Kovach 2009; Moser 2018). Pimacihowin also expresses the concept of travelling and living on the land (Wolvengrey 2011); in other words, engaging with the land. Thus, 'keeping the land pure' is not only about the land in a scientific Euro-Western sense, which often severs connections between land and humans, but accounts for both human and other-than-human ways of living and engaging with other beings.

3.2 LESSONS LEARNED: INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT (IQ)

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) provides another example of rare instances when an Indigenous concept — in its original language — was included in policymaking, including engagement activities related to infrastructure development (i.e., marine shipping operations). Like Î-kanatak Askiy, IQ was adopted to reflect respect to the Inuit worldviews and culture. Translated directly, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit means "that which Inuit have always known to be true" (Tagalik 2012, as cited in Docherty-Skippen and Woodford 2017). In 1999, the Bathurst Mandate announced that IQ is the central philosophical tenet and a guiding directive of the Government of Nunavut (Wenzel 2004).

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) as a concept suggests that Inuit attitudes toward nature are more detailed and nuanced than as viewed in the framework of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and other cultural ecological concepts (Wenzel 2004). Besides ecologically focused knowledge, IQ encompasses all aspects of traditional Inuit culture, including values, worldview, language, social organization, knowledge, life, skills, perception and expectations (NSDC 1998b as cited in Levesque 2014). The term IQ is closely linked to preservation of Inuit culture, and its progressive use to inform decision-making is key to the social and cultural identity of Inuit people (Dylan and Thompson 2019). As Tester and Irniq (2008) note, in comparison with TEK or TK, IQ is a seamless concept, as it is based on biophysical information *and* cultural wisdom. IQ is rooted in the idea of respect for the land, the animals, the deceased and all other beings on the land (Laugrand and Oosten 2009). Furthermore, IQ is the opposite of a rigid hierarchy and credentialism, imposed by the Westminster system of the government — rather, power is traditionally related to skill and practice (Tester and Irniq 2008), which are seen as distinct in many non-Inuit understandings. The dominant Western conception of power is related to the notion of a culturally homogenous community of autonomous, rational individuals, and it provides poor foundations for the understanding of politics in a culturally and ethnically diverse political community (Hindess 1992). Thus, the Inuit concept of power carried by the IQ

concept offers separate, non-Western understanding of political power, which is not based on domination, and does not imply cultural homogeneity of a society, but rather acknowledges a plurality of skills, practices and understandings.

The Igloolik Conference adopted IQ for several reasons. First, non-Inuit natural and social scientists understood Inuit TK quite narrowly, restricted to animal species and the environment. IQ suggests a broader and deeper conceptualization of the Inuit knowledge. Second, by incorporating the term IQ, the conference addressed the need to incorporate Inuit culture into all areas of policy development (Wenzel 2004). Therefore, the idea of incorporating the IQ term into policy as opposed to TEK, was related to the deeper conceptual meaning of IQ in the Inuktitut language, and to highlight the importance of Inuit cultural elements in policymaking processes.

Despite the efforts, the impact of IQ incorporation into policy was quite low (cf. Peletz, Hanna and Noble 2020). Despite tremendous political emphasis being placed on incorporating IQ into the Nunavut Impact Review Board and other departments work, very little legal emphasis is placed on doing so (Dylan and Thompson 2019; DeCouto 2020). As Levesque (2014) argues, the Nunavut bureaucracy inherited the Northwest Territories' rigid political structure, into which IQ does not easily fit. However, despite certain limitations, the incorporation of the term in Inuktitut still brings benefits to the Inuit. As Levesque (2014) states, IQ is the Indigenization of modernity, as it transforms Nunavut operations and legislation into something more meaningful to Inuit IQ and brings confidence that the Inuit values are included in territorial programs and policies (Levesque 2014).

A study conducted not long after the establishment of Nunavut sheds further light on how IQ is linked to language and pluralist realities. McCready (2002) found that for some Inuit working in the government, incorporating IQ in the workplace means that one must be an expert in Inuit culture. In this regard, Inuit respondents felt like knowing Inuktitut is the very essence of IQ. However, at the same time, understanding IQ does not always require full comprehension of Inuit culture and language for non-Inuit (McCready 2002). Non-Inuit who work for the Government of Nunavut will have to become educated to a certain degree about Inuit culture and to challenge their approach to a different environment and cultural context, as IQ is about learning to respect different ways of thinking and different ways of being (McCready 2002) — this notion speaks directly to our discussions in this paper about how language usage can be used to foster trust by allowing deeper understandings of culture and worldviews and accepting pluralist realism as Fellows (2017) describes.

3.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE USAGE OF INDIGENOUS TERMS FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE CNC CONCEPT.

Meaningful elements to Indigenous communities involve, but are not limited to, understanding consultation in the broader political context/fostering reconciliation through nation-to-nation relationships, accommodation of concerns and opportunities for meaningful input via early engagement in consultation phases/major decision-making processes (Boyd and Lorefice 2018). Despite the lack of meaningful IQ incorporation in the Inuit case, for example, there are potential benefits that come with inclusion of Indigenous terms into policymaking, and particularly in policies related to meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities. Drawing upon various studies, we present some positive implications here.

The first benefit is that the use of a local Indigenous language indexes and supports *the adoption of a localized approach in engagement.* An inclusion of specific Indigenous concepts relevant to the language of local community recognizes the importance of localized approach in community engagement and avoids the use of a pan-Indigenous approach, which is not appropriate in consultations (Kwiatkowski et al. 2009).[13] The usage of specific terms such as IQ or Î-kanatak Askiy recognizes linguistic and cultural diversity among northern communities.

A second major benefit is that Indigenous terms bring different worldviews and realities, understanding of which provides opportunities for reconciliation. The usage of the term IQ in Nunavut policymaking as opposed to TEK brought the importance of understanding that languages are not exhaustively intertranslatable (Harre et al. 1999). Î-kanatak Askiy carries a different, broader meaning than Indigenous monitoring, engagement and safety and environment oversight, as it is based on the idea of holistic view of the balanced economical, physical and spiritual relationships between all interactions (Cardinal and Hildebrant 2000; Kovach 2009, as cited in Moser 2018). As Fellows (2017) suggests, too, a pluralist approach is also vital because no one approach can manage to capture all of reality. Reconciliation "has been described as a process of formerly opposed parties moving towards some sort of forgiveness or coming-to-terms with one another" (Deckha 202? 80; see also Short 2005; Corntassel et al. 2009; Finegan 2018, 3). It is an ongoing process in involving the transformation of harmful colonial institutions through the incorporation and application of Indigenous ontologies (Deckha 2020); we argue that using Indigenous language and concepts are an integral way to advance reconciliation within the consultation context.

Building on the second benefit, the distinctive terms in Indigenous languages also *index the difference between Indigenous and Eurocentric values, which is present in Indigenous self-governance and legal traditions.* Indigenous terms reflect distinct non-Western concepts of political power, legislation and governance. In North American Indigenous societies we tend to see an emphasis on equality due to prominent values such as sharing and generosity, the importance of the group as opposed to the individual, and the concepts of wholeness and totality (Little Bear 2000); as mentioned earlier, IQ refers to the idea of power based on skills and practice (Tester and Irniq 2008) as opposed to the Western concept of political power as domination over autonomous rational individuals (Hindess 1992). Both academic and consultation/assessment-based engagement with communities can be shaped to reflect Indigenous values rather than Eurocentric. For example, Baker (2016, 2021) suggests that it is possible for research to be a reciprocal rather than purely extractive endeavor. Our policy recommendations for meaningful engagement attempt to create greater reciprocity via supporting Indigenous languages and knowledges.

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[13] Although Indigenous peoples across the continent share some common cultural traits and values, each Nation has many distinctive beliefs, laws and customs (Kwiatkowski et al. 2009).

A third major benefit is *support of existing efforts for language revitalization and reconciliation*. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, language revitalization programs and projects are underway in numerous communities, and in the previous subsections we have addressed several reasons as to why language matters within the context of environmental consultation. Further to this, language revitalization support was recognized as a major subtheme among the 94 Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (2015). None of the thematic sections in the report explicitly address guidelines for consultation with Indigenous communities. However, several Calls related to language (13-17) could be implemented in consultation projects to further meaningful engagement.

Of these, Call 13 is perhaps the most straightforward; it calls on "the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015, 2), and might seem to primarily address the federal government specifically. However, the right to use one's chosen language in dealing with federal, provincial or territorial bodies — as well as industry representatives — could be a way to reinforce meaningful engagement, as well. Call 14 asks for the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates five major principles: "i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them; ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties; iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation. iv. The preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities; v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015, 2).

While the creation of this Act is certainly the domain of the federal government, the principles of this call, specifically those that point out the "urgency to preserve them" and that the revitalization projects are best managed by communities could also be incorporated into best practices regarding meaningful engagement. As we have highlighted in this report, any way that Indigenous languages can be incorporated into the consultation process — formally or informally — can contribute not only to the preservation of languages but also their revitalization and revalorization. Not only does use of Indigenous language support the integrity of TEK and other information, as we have discussed in depth, but the consultation process, as we have mentioned, could provide another domain for the use of Indigenous language by subverting the expected hegemony of English and/or French. To incorporate the languages into the process not only maintains having multiple, diverse, spaces to use Indigenous languages, but is essential to their continued maintenance. Management of revitalization projects by the Indigenous community is also a key point that we highlighted in previous sections on guidelines for collaboration, and thus allowing communities to dictate both what information is most important to transmit, as well as supporting them in any language revitalization projects they are involved in (by purposefully incorporating use of Indigenous languages, hiring Elders, translators, etc. and providing opportunities for learners of these languages to be involved in the process) through consultation can help to reinforce this Call. Call 17, which asks for administrative costs for name changes to be waived for residential school survivors who had their names changed during their institutionalization (Truth and Reconciliation Council of Canada 2015)

can highlight in our context how the intentional use of Indigenous-language placenames and names for the land could become part of the consultation process in place of, or alongside, colonial names.

Finally, implementing UNDRIP is also something that the TRC calls for, both on the federal level but also at the level of other institutions, e.g., faith-based organizations (see TRCC (2015, 5) for example). An examination of UNDRIP (United Nations 2007) shows a focus on relationships between Indigenous Peoples and their lands/territories as well as knowledges. Article 12.1 focuses on the preservation of spiritual beliefs and practices and 13.1 on the transmission of language in particular (United Nations 2007, 12-13). The policy recommendations provided below attempt to ensure a wholistic support of UNDRIP when consulting about environmental knowledge and Indigenous knowledges more broadly.

As we have discussed in Section 2.3, an outside consultant or researcher speaking an Indigenous language is not a panacea for healing or resolving past exploitative relationships, but we suggest that sincere efforts made by outside researchers and consultants themselves to speak and learn Indigenous languages can contribute to creating more equitable, trust-based relationships and, thus, more meaningful engagement. Due to the long histories of English and French hegemony in consultation with the governments as well as researchers and consultants, attempts by non-Indigenous project-personnel to use Indigenous language are a gesture of respect and accommodation, as these attempts subvert the tradition of forcing or coercing speakers of Indigenous languages to conform and assimilate to an English dominant space. We would still stress that the acquisition and use of Indigenous languages by outside researchers and consultants should happen as much as possible. In this regard, we recommend federal research funding agencies such as Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to encourage potential applicants to use Indigenous languages in community-based research with Indigenous governments and communities.

We understand that it may certainly not be feasible or possible for all researchers and consultants on a project to attain fluency or anything beyond conversational competency in a language. Nevertheless, we want to stress that any and all serious attempts to learn some of the language could go a long way. This learning may lead to not only deeper and more accurate understanding of Indigenous knowledges that maintain the integrity of these epistemological systems, but it also indexes the willingness to work on Indigenous terms rather than assuming community assimilation to Euro-Western modes and practices.

4. CONCLUSION: REVISITING MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

We have argued that meaningful engagement in the CNC context must involve *acknowledging that language matters*, on multiple levels. The hegemony of English and/or French must be acknowledged by stakeholders when deciding which language to use in consultation processes. Meaningful engagement means not assuming English and/or French should be the languages of engagement simply due to their political and social dominance and the fact that they are enshrined as federal official languages. During any part of the engagement process, community members should have the choice to use their Indigenous languages if they deem it appropriate. As Bourdeau (1992) notes, power relations between speakers and hearers influence a discussion to a great extent because they can result in situations such that speakers have the right to speak, but hearers do

not understand them. Thus, the practical competence of speakers involves not only the capacity to produce grammatical utterances but also the capacity to make oneself heard, believed, obeyed and so on (Bourdeau 1992). Following this premise, we argue that using Indigenous languages in community engagement practices would affect the power imbalance imposed by colonialism, and as a result would allow Indigenous speakers to be heard on their own terms.

Giving community members a choice to determine the language of engagement is a move toward more meaningful reconciliation. Receiving information in the Indigenous language of the community — through translation, as Wright (2020) clarifies — allows for people to communicate nuances and meanings about culturally and environmentally relevant topics that may not be present or easily expressed in English or French. Depending on community members' habitual language choices, it may be easier to use one language over another in talking about specific topics. Talking about environmental impacts of large-scale infrastructure development on fish habitats, to provide just one example, may be easier to do in the Indigenous language if that is the language speakers tend to use with others in their community when discussing fish behavior, environmental features, etc.

There is also the issue that Indigenous knowledge may become 'lost in translation.' We have explained in depth about how language ideologies circulating among members of many Indigenous cultures purport that land and language are fundamentally intertwined and intrinsically reflect Indigenous worldviews in ways that colonial languages like English or French do not. We provide examples that reveal how some of the integrity of Indigenous knowledges can be lost when the Indigenous languages are not used to convey these knowledges, and show how non-speakers (i.e., consultants and researchers) can miss integral nuances of this knowledge when they do not understand the language. Using Indigenous languages wherever possible in the consulting process (and deemed appropriate by Indigenous community members, of course) can help shed light on worldviews in ways that might be otherwise missed.

We suggest that understanding worldviews better will then allow consultants to take these other epistemologies seriously and as equal systems to their own, and more fully *accommodate and integrate* (as per the definitions of meaningful engagement we have presented) Indigenous knowledges into the consultation process. This means that sometimes, instead of expecting Indigenous people to translate their knowledge into English or French, consultants should be prepared to learn and use (or at least become very familiar with) Indigenous languages to a greater degree in order to meet speakers of these languages halfway. As Little Bear (2000) has suggested, languages can play a role in reconciliation processes. While different Indigenous communities and individuals will not always agree on how (or whether) reconciliation with non-Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government is possible to achieve, some do hold the belief that the kinds of learning and socialization that happen through acquiring a language reveal much about Indigenous worldviews, and this can lead to deeper respect and regard for Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies among non-Indigenous people. Meaningful engagement can thus also be enacted through creating policy recommendations that help to support ongoing language revitalization projects — and thus broader processes of reconciliation (The Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Calls to Action) and decolonization/ Indigenization (e.g., via the implementation of UNDRIP) happening in Indigenous communities as part of the consultation process.

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